News release

5 September 2007

New Chief Executive for the Met Office

Robert Napier, Met Office Chairman, announces today a new Chief Executive for the Met Office:

"I am delighted to announce that following an open competition, we have appointed John Hirst as the new Chief Executive of the Met Office. John's first class record in leading technical and science organisations to business success and growth, ideally matches the needs of the Met Office - a world-class science organisation ripe for accelerated growth. We recognise today a debt of gratitude to Mark Hutchinson the outgoing CE who, highly respected and popular with colleagues and customers, leaves us with a very successful business providing weather and climate science advice world-wide"

John was CEO of Premier Farnell from 1998-2005 where he built an excellent leadership team, redefined the business both operationally and financially; and repositioned it so as to grow market share and earnings. Formerly John was with ICI where he held many senior positions including CEO of the global Speciality Chemical Division during a period of high revenue growth, and undertook a series of successful acquisition and merger negotiations.

John Hirst says of his new role as Met Office Chief Executive "I am very excited at the prospect of leading this highly respected and successful science organisation at the forefront of one of the world's great issues. The challenge for us now is to harness the Met Office's world-leading weather and climate science for even greater business and customer benefit".

Sir Ian Andrews, Second Permanent Under Secretary for Defence, said "The Met Office under Mark Hutchinson's leadership has seen exceptional success: achieving for two years running all of the Key Performance Targets set by its owner, and importantly delivering outstanding forecast advice ahead of the recent flooding. John Hirst's substantial record of leadership, unerring customer focus, and ability to motivate and inspire will ensure the Met Office's continued success in providing critical weather and climate change advice."

For further information:
Met Office Press Office +44 (0)1392 886655
E-mail: pressoffice@metoffice.gov.uk

Met Office Customer Centre 0870 900 0100
If you're outside the UK +44 (0)1392 885680

©Crown copyright www.metoffice.gov.uk